

Minister: Price control on essential foods during MCO, no need for panic buying

Sunday, 12 Apr 2020 04:15 PM MYT

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A man pushes a shopping cart filled with groceries in Kuala Lumpur April 9, 2020. — Picture by Ahmad Zamzahuri

KUALA LUMPUR, April 12 — The government will impose price controls similar to festive seasons on selected essential items during the third phase of the movement control order from April 15 to April 28, Defence Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob said.

He also assured Malaysians that they have no need for panic buying as there is sufficient food supply in the country.

“Since we will start with the next phase of MCO on April 15 later, so we understand that there may be irresponsible traders that may take advantage to increase prices.

“Therefore, the decision of today’s meeting is that the Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Ministry (KPDNHEP) will have to and will be implementing a maximum price scheme as a step to curb the increase of prices during the MCO,” he said during a press conference broadcast live today.

“As usual, the price control scheme will be implemented during festive periods, but we have already decided not to wait for festive periods, once we enter the third phase of the MCO, the price control scheme must be implemented and the list of products will be announced by the KPDNHEP. This is to ensure that there are no price hikes on goods although the MCO is continued,” he added.

As for food supplies, he said both the KPDNHEP and the Agriculture and Agro-based Industry Ministry (MOA) briefed the Cabinet today that the supply of all food items, especially rice, was “more than enough”.

“So although the third phase of MCO will be done next week, there is no need for the public to be worried whether food supplies are sufficient or not, as the two ministries KPDNHEP and MOA have carried out checks and found sufficient supplies. So don’t panic buy because as I have already explained, all is sufficient,” he said.

On Friday, the government announced a second extension to the MCO which was initially due to end on April 14.

In the third instalment, the MCO will continue to run for another two weeks from April 15 to April 28, which is also just a few days after the start of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan.

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